



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

**Department for Levelling up, Housing and
Communities**

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Mr Owen Boswarva
Flat 42
New Priestgate House
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Peterborough
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Date: **21 June 2022**

Dear Mr Boswarva,

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - 18441214

Thank you for your request for information which was received on 5 April 2022.

You requested: *"Please provide a copy of all submissions to DCLG's 2016 consultation 'Strengthening Local Government Transparency'."*

This request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities has refused your request for information because it falls within section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Under section 14(1) of FOIA, the Department is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the request is deemed vexatious.

Please be assured that we are using the term 'vexatious' only because this is the word used in the Act. It is not to imply that the Department in any way considers your request to be vexatious in the more traditional, dictionary definition of the word.

Your request covers a large volume of information which the Department would need to go through carefully in order to identify issues which might engage FOIA exemptions and apply any necessary redactions. We received a significant number of consultation responses by email, and each response provided answers to multiple questions and an 'any other info' section, all of which are free text. Therefore we would need to manually check many thousands of free text answers for personal information, commercially sensitive information, or other information which may engage FOIA exemptions. This would be a significant burden on the Department and divert valuable resources away from the Department's other work.

We believe that releasing all submissions to the consultation at this stage serves no particular public interest and is outweighed by the level of burden imposed on the Department in processing your request. We are therefore not obliged to consider your request any further.

While in accordance with section 14(1) of FOIA we are not obliged to consider the request as it currently stands, it may be that we can provide you with some information if you are able to narrow the scope of your request, possibly by specifying the consultation response(s) in which you are interested. If you do so, your request will be handled as a new request under the appropriate legislation.

It should be noted that if you did re-submit a narrowed request there is still the possibility that this request could also be subject to the application of the section 14 provisions or other FOIA exemptions.

Complaints procedure

If you are unhappy with this response, we will review it and report back to you. (This is called an internal review.) If you want us to do this, let us know by return email within two months of receiving this response. You can also ask by letter addressed to:

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Knowledge and Information Access Team
4th Floor SE, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

If you are unhappy with the outcome of this internal review, you can ask the independent Information Commissioner to investigate. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at email address casework@ico.org.uk or use their online form at ico.org.uk/concerns or call them on 0303 123 1113.

Kind regards,

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities FOI Team